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Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin Receives \$80,000 “GROW” Grant

Money Will Support Area Workforce Development and Economic Growth

Madison – Today, Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman announced the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin, Inc. will receive an \$80,000 Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin (GROW) grant towards workforce development and economic growth. GROW funding will allow Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin to continue its efforts, in partnership with the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, to pursue an integrated economic and workforce development strategy for south central and southwestern Wisconsin as a single economic region.

“Governor Doyle’s *Grow Wisconsin* plan has been a catalyst for regional workforce and economic development, and I applaud the leadership of the two Boards. They are working to bridge geographic boundaries and develop strong relationships with regional economic, government, education, business and labor leaders,” said Secretary Gassman.

Building on the “Seeds of Workforce Change” regional strategic analysis funded with a GROW grant in 2005, the Boards will focus on expanding the skill sets of lower paid, entry-level workers in the region. The Boards will develop new skills training in food processing, health care and the life sciences leading to jobs with career paths and advancement opportunities. The Boards also seek to merge workforce and economic development efforts in the two regions and to further expand south central Wisconsin’s successful “Jobs with a Future” industry training partnership strategy to southwest Wisconsin.

The Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin covers the counties of Columbia, Dodge, Dane, Jefferson, Marquette and Sauk. The Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board covers the Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, Richland and Rock counties.

“The partnership of these two Boards complements the work and mission of the Governor’s Council on Workforce Investment,” said Secretary Gassman. “As we develop our workforce and increase career opportunities, we also strengthen our local economy and excite current and prospective employers.”

The GROW grants were established as part of Governor Doyle’s *Grow Wisconsin* initiative. The funds are available through the state Council on Workforce Investment and are administered by DWD. In 2005, a total of \$465,000 was granted to seven regions to cover the state. An additional \$500,000 is available in 2006 to build upon the successes of the local collaborations to continue to promote regional workforce and economic approaches throughout Wisconsin.

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